

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION NATO
OSD/ISA/PP (DOD)
DA/WASHDC //DAMI-TST// DEPARTMENT OF ARMY

S E C R E T STATE 131841

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:MILI, GW, UR, CSCE, PFOR

SUBJECT: OPPOSING FORCES TRAINING PROGRAM (OPFOR) /

REFS: (A) STATE 106613, (B) BONN 8322, (C) NATO 3411,
(D) MOSCOW 6802

1. (C) THE US ARMY WISHES, CONTINGENT ON FRG GOVERNMENT
AGREEMENT, TO PROCEED WITH PILOT OPFOR PROGRAM (REF A)
BEGINNING JULY 1, 1977. USAREUR-WIDE PROGRAM, HOWEVER,
WOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL JANUARY 1978. REGARDING CONCERNS
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EXPRESSED BY EMBASSY MOSCOW (REF D), DEPARTMENT FEELS
LIMITED NATURE OF PILOT PROGRAM REDUCES POSSIBILITY OF
SOVIETS USING THE ACTIVITY FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES DURING
BELGRADE CSCE MEETINGS.

2. (C) PILOT PROGRAM IS RELATIVELY SMALL (APPROX. 200
TROOPS) AND WILL BE CONFINED TO A SINGLE US INSTALLATION.

IT IS INTENDED TO REFINE TECHNICAL WORKING PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF LARGER PROGRAM BEGINNING IN JANUARY. THERE WILL BE NO PUBLIC AFFAIRS COVERAGE AND ONLY CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR USE IN CASE OF INQUIRIES.

3. (C) FOR BONN: YOU SHOULD FIRST APPROACH MFA TO DISCUSS OPFOR PLAN AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CSCE. YOU

SHOULD INDICATE THAT WE HAVE WEIGHED THESE IMPLICATIONS, BELIEVE THEY WOULD BE MANAGEABLE IN VIEW OF LIMITED NATURE OF PILOT PROGRAM, AND INTEND TO TAKE STEPS TO INSURE THAT PILOT PROGRAM IS STRICTLY CONTROLLED TO MINIMIZE PUBLIC EXPOSURE. IF MFA OFFICIALS CONCUR IN THIS VIEW, YOU SHOULD THEN APPROACH FEDERAL MOD. IN YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH GERMANS, YOU SHOULD INDICATE WE WISH TO CONSULT FULLY WITH THEM ON PILOT PROGRAM, INCLUDING PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASPECTS.

4. (C) FOR BONN: IF ASKED, YOU SHOULD APPROVE GERMAN ARMY REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN USAREUR-WIDE PROGRAM WHEN IMPLEMENTED IN JANUARY 1978. HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT WISHES TO DISCOURAGE FRG FROM INVOLVEMENT IN PILOT PROGRAM BECAUSE OF BELGRADE MEETING AND BECAUSE PILOT PROGRAM IS INTENDED SIMPLY TO REFINE TECHNICAL WORKING PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF USAREUR-WIDE OPFOR PROGRAM.

5. (C) FOR MOSCOW. DEPARTMENT HAS OBTAINED ANSWERS FROM DOD REGARDING YOUR QUESTION ABOUT COMPARABLE SOVIET PROGRAM (PARA 5, REF D). SOVIET MILITARY LITERATURE CONTAINS
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MANY REFERENCES TO THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CONDUCTING TRAINING EXERCISES USING OPPONENT'S EQUIPMENT AND TACTICS. MORE SPECIFICALLY, WE SEE US AND NATO VULNERABILITIES LAID OUT IN SOVIET FIELD MANUALS, CONTINUED REFERENCE TO WESTERN (NATO) TACTICS AND EQUIPMENT IN MILITARY HERALD AND MILITARY THOUGHT, US AND NATO TACTICS PLAYED IN EXERCISES BY THE "AGGRESSOR" FORCES. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF US AIRMOBILE TACTICS FOR WHICH SOVIETS ARE DEVISING COUNTERMEASURES. IT IS COMMON PRACTICE IN SOVIET TRAINING AREAS TO FIND MOCKUPS OF US/NATO EQUIPMENT. FORMER ATTACHES IN MOSCOW HAVE ALSO REPORTED SEEING US TANKS IN SOVIET MAINTENANCE SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS BEING INSTRUCTED ON MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES.

6. (S/NOFORN) FOR MOSCOW: WE ALSO HAVE EVIDENCE OF ACTUAL TRAINING CENTER AT FURSTENBURG IN GDR, REplete WITH BOTH REAL AND SIMULATED US EQUIPMENT. PACT U;ITS ARE TRAINED THERE TO CONDUCT LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE AND COMMANDO RAIDS AGAINST US NUCLEAR DELIVERY UNITS. EVIDENCE

INDICATES A US 8-INCH SP HOWITZER AND MOCKUPS OF PERSHING,
SERGEANT, LANCE, AND HONEST JOHN ROCKETS. THIS INFOR-
MATION TOO SENSITIVE FOR USE IN CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE,
ALTHOUGH IT COULD BE USED AS APPROPRIATE IN PRIVATE DIS-
CUSSIONS WITH SOVIETS SHOULD THEY CRITICIZE OUR CON-
DUCTING OPFOR ON FRG SOIL.

VANCE

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